

V. 1.
28

AN Excellent BALLAD

OF A
Noble Marquis and Patient GRISSEL.

To the Tune of, *The Bride's Good-morrow*, &c.



A Noble Marquis,
as he did ride a Hunting,
Hard by a Forest side,
A fair and comely Maiden,
As she did sit a spinning,
His gentle Eye espy'd:
Most fair and lovely,
And of a comely Grace was she,
Altho' in simple Attire;
She sung full sweetly,
With a Voice melodiously,
Which set the Lord's Heart on Fire.
The more he look'd the more he might,
Beauty was his Heart's Delight:
And to this Damsel
Strait the Noble went;
God speed, quoth he, thou famous Flower,
Fair Mistress of this homely Bower,
Where Love and Virtue
Dwell with sweet Content.

With comely Gesture,
And modest mild Behaviour,
She bids him welcome then:
She entertained him
In faithful friendly Manner,
And all his Gentlemen:
The noble Marquis
In his Heart felt such a Flame,
Which set his Senses all at Strife;
Quoth he, fair Maiden,
Shew me soon what is thy Name,
I mean to make thee my Wife.
Grissel is my Name, quoth she,
Far unfit for your Degree;
A silly Maiden,
And of Parents poor.
Nay, Grissel, thou art rich, he said,
A virtuous, fair and comely Maid;
Grant me thy Love,
And I will ask no more,

At length she consented,
And being both contented,
They married were with speed;
Her Country Ruffet
Was chang'd to Silk and Velter,
As to her State agreed.
And when that she
Was trimly 'tired in the same,
Her Beauty shin'd most bright,
Far staining every other
Fair and Princely Dame,
That did appear in Sight:
Many envied her therefore,
Because she was of Parents poor,
And 'twixt her Lord and she
Great Strife did raise:
Some said this, and some said that,
And some did call her Beggar's Brat,
And to her Lord
They would her oft dispraise.

O noble Marquis,
Quoth they, why dost thou wrong us,
Thus basely for to wed,
Who might have gotten
An honourable Lady
Into your Princely Bed?
Who will not now
Your noble Issue soon deride,
Which shall hereafter be born,
That are of Blood so base,
Born by the Mother's Side,
The which will bring them in Scorn?
Put her therefore quite away,
And take to you a Lady gay,
Whereby your Lineage
May renowned be.
Thus every Day they seem'd to prate,
That malic'd Grissel's good Estate,
Who all this while
Took it most patiently,

When that the Marquis
Did see they were bent thus
Against his lawful Wife,
Whom he most dearly,
Tenderly and entirely
Beloved as his Life;
Meaning in secret
For to try her patient Heart,
Thereby her Foes for to disgrace,
Thinking to shew her
A hard discourteous Part,
That Men might pity her Case;
Great with Child this Lady was,
And at last it came to pass,
Two goodly Children
At one Birth she had;
A Son and Daughter God had sent,
Which did their Mother well content,
And which did make
Their Father's Heart full glad.

Great Royal Feasting
Was at these Childrens Christening,
And Princely Triumph made;
Six Weeks together,
All Nobles that came thither,
Were entertain'd and stay'd;
And when that all the pleasant
Sporting quite was done,
The Marquis a Messenger sent
For his young Daughter,
And a pretty smiling Son;
Declaring his full Intent.
How that the Babes must murdered be,
For so the Marquis did decree:
Come let me have
The Children, then he said;
With that fair Grissel wept full sore,
She wrung her Hands, but said no more,
But my Gracious Lord
Must have his Will obey'd.

She took the Babes
Even from the Nursing Ladies,
Between her tender Arms:
She often wishes,
With many sorrowful Kisses,
That she might ease their Harms:
Farewell, farewell
A thousand times, my Children dear,
Never shall I see you again;
'Tis long of me,
Your sad and woful Mother here,
For whose Sake both must be slain;
Had I been born of Royal Race,
You might have liv'd in happy Case.
But you must die
For my Unworthiness:
Come, Messenger of Death, quoth she;
Take my dearest Babes to thee,
And to their Father
My Complaints express:

He took the Children,
And to his noble Master
He bore them thence with speed,
Who in secret sent them
Unto a noble Lady,
To be brought up indeed:
Then to fair Grissel
With a heavy Heart he goes,
Where she sat mildly all alone;
A pleasant Gesture,
And a lovely Look she shews,
As if no Grief she had known:
Quoth he, my Children now are slain,
What thinks fair Grissel of the same?
Sweet Grissel now
Declare thy Mind to me:
Sith you, my Lord, are pleas'd with it,
Poor Grissel thinks the Action fit;
Both I and mine
At your Command will be.

My Nobles murmur
Fair Grissel, at thy Honour,
And I no Joy can have,
'Till thou be banish'd
Both from my Court and Presence,
As they unjustly crave:
Thou must be stripp'd
Of thy brave Garments all,
And as thou cam'st to me,
In homely Grey,
Instead of Silk and purest Pall,
Now all thy Cloathing must be:
My Lady thou must be no more,
Nor I thy Lord, which grieves me sore,
The poorest Life
Must now content thy Mind:
A Groat to thee I dare not give,
Thee to maintain while I do live,
Against my Grissel
Such great Foes I find.

When gentle Grissel
Did hear these woful Tidings,
The Tears stood in her Eyes,
Nothing she answer'd,
No Words of Discontentment
Did from her Lips arise.
Her Velvet Gown
Most patiently she stripped off,
Her Kirtle of Silk with the same:
Her Ruffet Gown
Was brought again with many a Scoff,
To hear them herself she did frame;
When she was dress'd in this Array,
And ready for to pass away,
God send long Life
Unto my Lord, quoth she;
Let no Offence be found in this,
To give my Lord a parting Kiss,
With watry Eyes,
Farewell, my Dear, said she.

From Princely Palace
Unto her Father's Cottage
Poor Grissel she is gone;
Full fifteen Winters
She lived there contented,
No Wrong she thought upon:
And at this Time, through all
The Land the Speeches went,
The Marquis should married be
Unto a noble Lady
Of high Descent,
And to the same all Parties did agree:
The Marquis sent for Grissel fair,
The Bride's Bed-Chamber to prepare,
That nothing therein
Might be found awry.
The Bride was with her Brother come,
Which was great Joy to all and some;
But Grissel took all this
Most patiently.

And in the Morning,
When as they should be wedded,
Her Patience there was try'd;
Grissel was charged,
Herself in friendly Manner
For to attire the Bride:
Most willingly
She gave her Consent to do the same:
The Bride in Bravery was dress'd,
And presently
The noble Marquis thither came,
With all his Lords at his Request:
O Grissel, I will ask of thee,
If to this Match thou wilt agree?
Methinks thy Looks
Are waxed wondrous coy:
With that they all began to smile;
And Grissel she reply'd the while,
God send Lord Marquis
Many Years of Joy.

The Marquis was moved;
To see his best Beloved
Thus patient in Distress;
He slept unto her,
And by the Hand he took her;
These Words he did express:
Thou art my Bride,
And all the Brides I mean to have,
These two thine own Children be,
The Youthful Lady
On her Knees did Blessing crave,
Her Brother as well as she.
And you that envy her Estate,
Whom I have made my chosen Mate,
Now blush for Shame,
And honour virtuous Life;
The Chronicles of lasting Fame
Shall evermore extol the Name
Of Patient GRISSEL,
My most constant Wife.